

PARTNERS IN FLIGHT NEWSLETTER

<http://www.partnersinflight.org>

July 2003

NATIONAL

PIF North American Landbird Conservation Plan

The eagerly anticipated Continental Plan is undergoing a final revision based on a meeting of the PIF Technical Committee in late May and a number of subsequent adjustments in content. Population estimates, biological objectives, monitoring needs, plan evaluation, recommendations and links to future international expansion continue to be refined in important ways.

For example, one of the topics that emerged very recently that we had not been planning to address was exotic bird species. Here are a few preliminary analyses that caught our attention. European Starlings outnumber flickers in all but a few Bird Conservation Regions south of the boreal forest, typically by more than 10:1. Starlings (121,000,000) outnumber all 22 species of woodpeckers (70,000,000) and 3 species of bluebirds (15,000,000) combined, in Canada and the U.S. as a whole. As starlings compete with these species for nest cavities, this is a much bigger issue than we realized. And until the population estimates for landbirds were made, this perspective simply was not possible.

We now plan to have a near-final version available for distribution at the IAFWA meeting in Madison, WI in September. Minor changes can be made following that date but we expect to print the final very shortly thereafter. A notice will be distributed when the plan is printed and available. Anyone interested in seeing the penultimate version should contact me.—Terry Rich (mailto:terry_rich@fws.gov)

Partners In Flight Organization and Strategic Plan

The PIF Joint Steering Committee held a special meeting in Denver in July to make final decisions on the PIF U. S. Organizational Structure and PIF Strategic Plan. All comments received on these documents since our March 2003 Management Steering Committee meeting in Winston-Salem, NC were considered. Changes in structure and procedures have been approved with the aim of refitting the partnership to meet needs identified for the next decade. One key task will be stepping down continental landbird objectives in various practical ways for use by different partners. Both documents will be distributed via e-mail when final, no later than mid-August.

Asilomar Proceedings

Reviews and revisions continue on the last of around 200 manuscripts submitted for publication in the proceedings of the Asilomar conference. We continue to seek additional funds (about \$20,000) but still hope to have the proceedings out in 2003. The proceedings may be cited as:

Doe, J. and J. White. in review. Paper Title. Bird Conservation Implementation and Integration in the Americas: Proceedings of the Third International Partners in Flight Conference 2002 (C.J. Ralph and T.D. Rich, eds.). U.S.D.A. Forest Service, GTR-PSW-xxx, Albany, CA.

A quick tally shows the following agencies and organizations have contributed the most papers to the proceedings (at least one author is from that partner):

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service – 30
U. S. Geologic Survey – 23
Canadian Wildlife Service – 20
U. S. Forest Service – 20
PRBO Conservation Science – 15
Mexican NGOs - 12
National Audubon Society/BirdLife International – 9

—Terry Rich (mailto:terry_rich@fws.gov), C. J. Ralph (mailto:cjr2@humboldt.edu)

Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grants Program

Projects approved for funding under the 2003 NMBCA are now listed at <http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NMBCA/projectsNar.htm>. One or more grants were awarded to 17 countries while 15 were awarded within the U. S. These include 22 multi-country projects and 4 multi-state projects. Although the total number of applications was down from the previous year, the quality of proposals remained extremely high, thus maintaining a keen level of competition.

North American Wetland Conservation Act - U. S. Standard Grant Instructions Available

The 2003 U. S. Standard Grant instructions are now available on the NAWCA web site at <http://birdhabitat.fws.gov>. Click on Wetlands Grants Program and then click on U.S. Standard Grants. Next **due date is 25 July 2003**.— Bettina Sparrowe (mailto:bettina_sparrowe@fws.gov)

Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program

The CELCP was created “for the purpose of protecting important coastal and estuarine areas that have significant conservation, recreation, ecological, historical, or aesthetic values, or that are threatened by conversion from their natural or recreational state to other uses”. The final guidelines establish the eligibility, procedural and programmatic requirements for participation in the program, including criteria for financial assistance awards. Final guidelines can be found on the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management website at: <http://www.ocrm.nos.noaa.gov/landconservation.html>. For additional information, contact Elaine Vaudreuil (mailto:Elaine.Vaudreuil@noaa.gov)

Catalog of Federal Funding for Watershed Protection

EPA has recently updated the Catalog of Federal Funding Sources for Watershed Protection. This Catalog is now online as an easy to use, searchable Web site. The Web site provides information for watershed practitioners and others on 84 federal funding sources that may be available to help fund various watershed-related projects. The Web site updates EPA's Catalog of Federal Funding Sources for Watershed Protection, previously published in 1999. See <http://www.epa.gov/watershedfunding>.

Directory of Important Bird Areas in Panama

The most detailed study to date of the status of birds and other wildlife in Panama, for its size one of the world's most biologically diverse nations, has revealed that many of its most globally important sites enjoy no formal protection and are in danger from deforestation, development, and other threats. The *Directory of Important Bird Areas in Panama* shows that El Chorogo-Palo Blanco, the best remaining site for the endemic birds of Panama's western Pacific slope, and the Upper Bay of Panama, used by more than 1.3 million migratory shorebirds from North America each year, are in urgent need of conservation action.

The 342-page book, written in both English and Spanish, describes each of the 88 IBAs, and includes a list of threatened birds, data on other threatened/endemic fauna, and conservation issues for each site.

The book has been produced by the Panama Audubon Society with financing from Vogelbescherming Nederland (BirdLife's Partner in the Netherlands) and the U. S. Forest Service, and is based on studies sponsored by Panama's Fundación Natura. It may be obtained from the Panama Audubon Society, Aptdo 2026, Balboa, Republic of Panama. Cost is US\$25.00 each plus \$5 postage.—Norita Scott-Pezet (mailto:ecoconsult@pty.com) [Editor's Note: The nice thing is that you can just send a check.]

Second Draft of NAWMP 2003 Update Available

The NAWMP Committee has released the second draft of the 2003 NAWMP. The full second draft (two separate documents) is available for review on our web page, <http://birdhabitat.fws.gov/NAWMP/2003nawmpdraft.htm>. The consultation period will run through 31 August. Instructions for making comments are included on the website.—Seth Mott (mailto:seth_mott@fws.gov)

Wings Over Alaska

Governor Frank H. Murkowski announced a new program to recognize those citizens who are able to identify at least 50 species of Alaskan birds. The new program, called "Wings Over Alaska," offers certificates to bird watchers at four levels--from the novice at 50 birds to the expert at 275 birds. "The goals of this program are to inspire interest in birds and bird conservation and encourage birders to take their skills to a higher level," said Murkowski. Funding for the program is being provided in part through a grant from Alaska Airlines to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. These funds will help match new federal dollars provided to each state for wildlife programs.

WMI Bird Funding Workshop Results

The Wildlife Management Institute held a Bird Funding Workshop in late January 2003 to try to find a consensus among all the bird initiatives as to the highest priorities for future funding. Shortly after the workshop, WMI convened a small group of participants who had expressed interest in working together to implement the workshop recommendations with appropriate activities on the Hill and with the Administration. These groups were: WMI, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, The Nature Conservancy, National Audubon Society, American Birding Association, Ducks Unlimited, American Bird Conservancy, and the Ornithological Council. Their first task was to accurately summarize the workshop recommendations. They reviewed workshop information to develop a short-term (one year) and a longer-term (five year) strategy. Identifying the priority categories was relatively easy, but identifying appropriate target goals, particularly for the long-term strategy proved difficult. The priority categories were determined to be:

North American Wetlands Conservation Act
Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act
Joint Ventures
State Wildlife Grants
Science and Monitoring

Major developments in these five arenas will be shared with everyone.—Rollie Sparrowe (mailto:wmirs@aol.com)

Launch of Avibase

Avibase is a new database that contains taxonomic and distribution information (including maps) for all 10,000 extant species and 22,000 subspecies of birds in the world. The site also offers searching tools for internet sites and images, as well as links to other sites such as ITIS (Integrated Taxonomic Information Systems) and Birdlife's Threatened Birds of the World website. This site is the result of nearly 12 years of work on a database that now contains close to a million records, including 300,000 occurrence records and 180,000 synonyms in over a dozen languages. Bird checklists of the world, which offers bird checklists for over 500 countries and regions, has now also been integrated into Avibase. Check this amazing resource at: <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/avibase/avibase.jsp>. -- Denis Lepage (mailto:dlepage@bsc-eoc.org)

IAFWA'S 2004 Educational Funding Grant Program

IAFWA is soliciting proposals for conservation education projects to be funded through its 2004 Education Funding Grant Program. IAFWA annually awards 4-6 grants in support of educational efforts that address the needs of wildlife management, associated recreation, and other closely related issues. These funds are awarded by recommendation of the Education Funding Working Group, as approved by the IAFWA membership during its business meeting in September, and total approximately \$20,000. All applicants will be notified by October 1, 2003, and grants will be awarded during 2004. Please submit proposals, along with additional inquiries, to Tom Clay at mailto:tclay@dnrmail.state.il.us. Applications must be received by 15 August 2003.

Report Released on Importance of Canada's Boreal Forest

One in three birds across North America owes its existence to Canada's boreal forest. New scientific evidence shows the fate of much of the continent's bird life depends on the future of this vast northern landscape – a future that is now at a cross roads. The evidence is detailed in the report, *The Importance of Canada's Boreal Forest to Landbirds* by biologist Peter Blancher of Bird Studies Canada. The study, based on an unprecedented compilation of bird census data from across Canada and the United States, was released on May 10th, International Migratory Bird Day.

Canada's boreal forest is the annual birthplace of as many as three billion of North America's warblers, thrushes, sparrows, hawks, woodpeckers and other land-living birds. It is also one of the largest intact forested ecosystems left in the world. The boreal, however, is under increasing pressure from development. Logging, agricultural conversion, oil and gas exploration and production, mining, and hydropower development are increasingly fragmenting the boreal. The U.S. can play a critical role in protecting the boreal. U.S. consumers purchase much of the pulp and wood products, oil and gas, and hydropower produced from the boreal.

Canada's boreal forest offers an unparalleled opportunity to save one of Earth's most important wilderness treasures.

The Importance of Canada's Boreal Forest to Landbirds was commissioned by the U.S.-based Boreal Songbird Initiative and the Canadian Boreal Initiative. The Boreal Songbird Initiative (BSI) is a new project dedicated to educating birdwatchers and naturalists throughout the United States about the importance of the boreal forest to migratory birds and assisting efforts in Canada to conserve it. To obtain a copy of the report, or find out more information about the Boreal Forest and birds, go to <http://www.borealbirds.org> or <http://www.borealcanada.ca>.

MEETINGS

Montana/Wyoming All-bird Conservation Workshop

The International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) received a grant to support a series of state and regional bird conservational workshops to provide agency biologists, land managers, and their conservation partners with the knowledge and tools needed to conduct more effective bird conservation programs. Montana and Wyoming will be co-hosting a workshop at the Holiday Inn Grand Montana in Billings on August 20-21, 2003. For details, see <http://fwp.state.mt.us/wildthings/birdconservation/content.asp> .— Bob Martinka (mailto:bmartinka@state.mt.us)

Next National Partners in Flight Meetings

The Partners in Flight Management Steering Committee will meet on 8-9 September 2003 at Devil's Head Convention Center near Baraboo, WI. One decision from the Joint Steering Committee is to make the MSC meetings problem-solving sessions rather than information sharing sessions. We will be selecting a few specific, important issues to address in working sessions. How to integrate PIF objectives into State Comprehensive Wildlife Plans is one main topic for this September.

Logistic details will be mailed to the MSC in mid-July and also will be available from Laurel Moore (mailto:lamore@fs.fed.us). As usual, our meetings will precede the annual conference of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (<http://www.iafwa.org/>) which will be held in Madison on 10-13 September. Several important bird conservation meetings will occur there.—Terry Rich (mailto:terry_rich@fws.gov)

27th Annual Meeting of the Waterbird Society

The 2003 Waterbird Society Meeting will be held in Cuiabá, the capital of the state of Mato Grosso, Brazil, on 24-27 September 2003. Cuiabá is a modern city of over a million people situated between two unique natural preserves: the Pantanal and Chapada dos Guimarães. The Pantanal, the largest freshwater wetland in the world, boasts the highest abundance of animal life on the continent, and is home to over 700 species of birds, 64 species of mammals, and 405 species of fishes. Wading bird colonies are a common attraction throughout the wetland while patches of upland vegetation provide habitat for high densities of landbirds. The dates for this meeting have been coordinated with the VII Neotropical Ornithological Congress (see next). We have left approximately 10 days between the two conferences to allow for travel. For details, see

<http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET/CWS/>.

The VIIth Neotropical Ornithological Congress

The 7th NOC will take place in Puerto Varas, Chile, 5-11 October 2003. Puerto Varas is 10 km N of Puerto Montt, an easy to reach, economical, and well-known travel destination in the beautiful Lake District of Chile. The Puerto Varas Conference Center, perched on a hill overlooking Lake Llanquihue and the Volcano Osorno, is only an 800-meter walk from downtown Puerto Varas. See <http://www.nocchile.cl> for all details.

Western Hemisphere Conference On Migratory Species

The subject meeting will take place concurrently with the NOC (see above) on 7-8 October 2003. In their Action Plan resulting from the Summit of the Americas meeting in Quebec in 2001, Leaders in the Western Hemisphere issued a call to “advance hemispheric conservation of plants, animals and ecosystems through...the development of a hemispheric strategy to support the conservation of migratory wildlife throughout the Americas.”

Conference Goal: This Western Hemispheric meeting will support the Summit Action Plan by articulating a strategy that identifies migratory bird conservation priorities and activities in the Americas. The products of this meeting will be: (1) proceedings; (2) an overall strategy including recommendations for implementation; and (3) a proposed follow-up mechanism.—Antoinette Condo

VII Congreso De La Sociedad Mesoamericana Para La Biología Y La Conservación

A nombre de la Sociedad Mesoamericana para la Biología y la Conservación (SMBC), es un placer invitar a toda la comunidad mesoamericana a participar activamente en el VII Congreso de la Sociedad Mesoamericana para la Biología y la Conservación: Hacia la conservación de la diversidad biológica y cultural de Mesoamérica, a realizarse en la

ciudad de Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, México, del 3 al 7 de noviembre de 2003. See <http://www.socmesoamericana.org/ev.php> for details.

Second Annual Yucatan Bird Festival

Enthusiasm is already riding high, both among our loyal supporters from up north and our ever-growing number of local birders, for the Yucatan Bird Festival which will be held 15–22 November 2003. This year the Secretary of Tourism of Yucatan has adopted the festival as one of its official events - thereby guaranteeing its foreseeable future. Pictures from last year's event are on the noted websites at the end of the program. Information on the upcoming festival is continually being posted. Ecoturismo Yucatán will assist in making hotel reservations, if desired: Ecoturismo Yucatán: (52-999-920-2772, fax: 52-999-925-9047, mailto:toh@ecoyuc.com, <http://www.ecoyuc.com/toh.html> and <http://www.yucatanbirds.org.mx> or contact Barbara MacKinnon in Mérida, Yucatán at mailto:barbaram@sureste.com.

2003 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference

The subject conference will be held in Kansas City at the Westin Crown Center on 7-10 December 2003. An important symposium arranged by Tom Will (mailto:tom_will@fws.gov) will be "Advances in All-Bird Conservation Planning and Implementation in the Midwest: Stepping Down Continental and Regional Objectives to Local Scales." This obviously is a critical link in all the PIF planning efforts and should be a day well worth your time. For conference details, see <http://www.midwest2003.com/>.

Other Meetings

See meetings listed in the Ornithological Newsletter (<http://birds.cornell.edu/OSNA/ornnewsl.htm>).

NEWS OF PEOPLE

Carol Beardmore Joins the Sonoran Joint Venture

After 7+ years as PIF Western Regional Coordinator, Carol has accepted a position with the Sonoran JV. Carol has been a fundamental contributor to the advancement of PIF regionally, nationally and internationally. Her creativity, outreach, perception, and hard work have been an invaluable addition to the partnership. Carol lead the WWG through biological assessment, planning and network building to the completion of Bird Conservation Plans for the entire West and the implementation of a variety of projects. Although we will greatly miss Carol's full-time dedication to the work yet to be done, she will continue to serve as an author of the PIF Continental Plan. Of course, her work with the JVs will help complete the integration of bird initiatives on the ground. You can reach Carol at:

Carol J. Beardmore
Sonoran Joint Venture
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2321 W. Royal Palm Rd. Suite 103
Phoenix, AZ 85021 USA
602-242-0524 ext. 248
602-242-2513 FAX
Carol_Beardmore@fws.gov

Megan Hill Joins RARE

After 6 years in Guatemala with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Megan has accepted a position with the RARE Center for Tropical Conservation, based in Arlington, VA (<http://www.rarecenter.org/index.cfm>). She will be working on their "Protection through Pride" global outreach and education program, with Paul Butler. Megan has served as chair or cochair of the PIF International Working Group for at least 6 years and helped get PIF groups started throughout Central America. She will continue in that capacity, pending her new workload. You can contact Megan at <mailto:mhill@rarecenter.org>.

David Pashley Receives Award

David Pashley received the American Birding Association's "Chandler Robbins Education and Conservation Award" for serving as both the PIF and US-NABCI National Coordinators, and for being a prolific and effective communicator on bird conservation issues during his tenures. We expect David to continue his successful approach as he now focuses energy on programs of the American Bird Conservancy.—Paul Baicich (mailto:baicich@aba.org)

Manantlán Institute of Ecology Wins National Nature Conservation Award

On 27 November 2002, the President of Mexico, Vicente Fox Quesada, presented the "Recognition for Nature Conservation" in the academic/research category to the University of Guadalajara's Manantlán Institute of Ecology and Conservation of Biodiversity (IMECBIO-South Coast Campus). IMECBIO has achieved international and national prominence for creating the Sierra de Manantlán Biosphere Reserve, presently considered one of the priority conservation sites in North America. Eduardo Santana, one of IMECBIO's representatives for the award, is a well known, respected and liked figure in the advancement of PIF in Mexico.

Help Wanted

I'm looking for someone to chair the national PIF Communications Committee. PIF just needs someone with a few good ideas and a little time. Contact Terry.

The next newsletter will be issued on 1 October 2003. Items are due 15 September 2003 to Terry Rich (mailto:terry_rich@fws.gov) by e-mail only. Please put "Newsletter Item" in the subject line.